

With food as tasty, tempting and healthy as this, it's no surprise that The Schoolrooms is a popular dining destination.

Words and photography: Stephanie Burns



SALAD DAYS

When you hear the words 'this is by far one of the best salads I have ever had' being spoken by your most health-conscious friend, you know the establishment you're dining in must be good.

The salad in question was from The Schoolrooms' healthy new menu and comprised a mouth-watering concoction of pickled beetroot, rocket, goats cheese, Granny Smith, walnut, crisp Parma ham and fresh fig. The vibrant dish looked as pretty as a picture and, if Fiona's bold statement was anything to go by, tasted even better.

I, too, had selected from the menu's new lighter offerings. The Nicoise salad was a step above any version I'd come across before, with seared fresh tuna steak coated in sesame seeds joined by soft-boiled egg, al dente green beans, new potatoes, juicy cherry tomatoes, olives and baby gem lettuce. You couldn't wish for a fresher, more inviting dish.

We'd been surprised upon our arrival just before 12.30pm that we had our pick of the seats in the near-empty café. By 12.35pm, however, almost every table was occupied

with the bustling lunchtime crowd.

Looking round, others were following our healthy lead – the Mediterranean superfood salad (couscous, pomegranate and pumpkin seeds, feta, peppers, coriander, mint, broccoli and citrus dressing, £7) drawing our attention away from our own table for just a second.

Of course, for those who prefer a heartier meal, the café's well-loved favourites still remain. I have a feeling there'd be an uproar if the butchery burger (£8), the Bradfield Brewery beer-battered haddock (£9) or the beautiful fat chips that accompany them were ever side-lined.

For dessert, though very tempted by the thought of the Peak District mess (Peak District raspberry ripple ice cream with crushed meringue and berries, £4), we couldn't resist the cake counter, which, as always, was loaded with all sorts of tasty treats. Fiona made a beeline for the lemon drizzle cake and delighted in its moist sponge, lemon curd filling and zesty icing. I chose a gluten-free version of a childhood favourite – delicious tea loaf bursting with juicy fruit.

No visit to The Schoolrooms is complete without a poke around the deli downstairs. After lunch, we took great pleasure in exploring the shelves, counters and fridges that groan with predominantly local fare. The homeware ranges also caught our eye – the wooden accessories crafted by hand, cute baskets and handmade cosmetics are a lovely addition to this slice of foodie heaven.

Whether you fancy a light and healthy lunch or a luxurious blow-out, The Schoolrooms can teach you a lesson or two in how to indulge any appetite.

What we ate

Pickled beet salad, £7
Nicoise salad, £8

Gluten-free tea loaf, £2.50
Lemon drizzle cake, £2.25

Still mineral water, £2
Americano, £2
Earl Grey, £2.50

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